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6 January 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Files
SUBJECT : Meeting with Alfreds Berzins

1. The undersigned met Alfreds Berzins in New York City, New York on 28 December 1953. As usual Berzins acted very glad to see the undersigned again and was exceedingly cordial. A number of general topics were discussed, including the matter of a successor to Feldmans, and the effect of the activities of the Kersten Committee in general. Berzins also indicated some interest as to whether any new development has occurred on the Vetrov matter. Nothing outstanding was learned during this conversation, and only some general information of a current nature regarding some Latvian personalities and some minor happenings were discussed.

2. Berzins related the fact that he had received several threatening phone calls advising him to refrain from further active participation in anti-communist affairs such as the Kersten Committee activities. (This fact was well known to the undersigned as it had been reported in the press). In addition, Berzins mentioned that for the first time, the official Soviet press in Moscow had actually mentioned an emigre personality by name in a derogatory fashion. This, according to Berzins, had never happened before; the official Soviet press in Moscow had usually made derogatory statements regarding emigre leaders in general, or emigre leaders of various nationalities by nationality rather than by name. Berzins then furnished the undersigned a translation of an article which appeared in Pravda and which was written by Anna Sakse, a winner of the Stalin prize and a Latvian by nationality. (It is noteworthy that it is this same Sakse who appeared in Stockholm some time ago and made several speeches, one of which was boycotted by some Latvian refugees there). The article is entitled, "The Wondering Circus of Mr. Kersten". The translation of this article is attached herewith.

3. Berzins also informed the undersigned that he had just learned that excerpts of this article had been broadcast by the Estonian radio on the preceding day. This, Berzins explained, is also without precedent. Heretofore a derogatory article appearing in a Soviet paper in Moscow and denouncing an emigre leader of one nationality by name had never been used as a basis for a broadcast originating in another Republic of the Soviet Union.

4. There is no question that Berzins is quite pleased not only about the threatening phone calls but also about the article mentioned above, because he feels such incidents perpetuate his fame, bringing him ever closer to the achievement of his ultimate goal, i.e., getting into public service for Latvia while in exile which would ultimately lead to a high position in the government of a free Latvia.

[]
AECOB Case Officer

Attachment:
1 - Translated Article

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